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Tacit Knowledge for Military Leaders: Lessons Learned Across Organizational Levels

Jennifer Hedlund and Robert J. Sternberg
Yale University

Joseph A. Horvath
IBM Consulting Group

George B. Forsythe and Scott Snook
United States Military Academy

Fort Leavenworth Research Unit
Stanley M. Halpin, Chief

June 1999



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for the Behavioral and Social Sciences**

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**U.S. Army Research Institute
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**EDGAR M. JOHNSON
Director**

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Technical review by

Angela I. Karrasch

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Across Organizational Levels**

Jennifer Hedlund
Yale University

Robert J. Sternberg
Yale University

Joseph A. Horvath
IBM Consulting Group

George B. Forsythe
United States Military Academy

Scott Snook
United States Military Academy

Ft. Leavenworth Research Unit
Stanley M. Halpin, Chief

U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences
5001 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22333-5600

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TACIT KNOWLEDGE FOR MILITARY LEADERS: LESSONS LEARNED ACROSS ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS

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TACIT KNOWLEDGE FOR MILITARY LEADERS: LESSONS LEARNED ACROSS ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS

For well over a decade, researchers and practitioners have been addressing the issue of how to prepare Army leaders for the 21st century. Army leaders will require a set of knowledge, skills, and abilities that allow for flexibility and adaptability in responding to increasingly complex and dynamic environments. Advances in technology, increases in the volume of information, shorter time periods for decision making, and a reliance on fewer people are just some of the factors that contribute to this complexity. But what does it take to be an effective leader in such an environment? One factor contributing to successful leadership is the ability to acquire knowledge from one's experiences and to apply that knowledge to new situations.

The U.S. Army devotes extensive resources to developing its leaders. According to Army doctrine (DA Pam 350-58), leader development is based on three pillars: 1) institutional training (formal schooling), 2) self-development, and 3) operational assignments. All three pillars are viewed as important to leadership development, yet much of the emphasis is placed on institutional training. Although formal training is an important and necessary part of leadership development, most practitioners will say that Army leaders learn about leading while doing real work in the motor pool, in the field, and in the barracks. Operational assignments provide opportunities for officers to learn how to apply leadership knowledge codified in doctrine and taught in the Army school system. They also provide a context for acquiring new knowledge about leadership--knowledge that may not be well supported by doctrine or formal training. The knowledge acquired through the latter (i.e., on the job as opposed to in school) will likely become increasingly more valuable as the environment demands greater flexibility on the part of leaders.

Although there is increasing recognition that operational assignments serve an important function in leadership development, there is little known about what and how leaders develop on the job. Our work has focused on what leaders learn about leading through on-the-job experiences. The approach seeks to understand the practically-oriented knowledge that leaders acquire primarily on their own, and which distinguishes more from less successful leaders. Robert Sternberg and his colleagues (Sternberg et al., 1993; Sternberg et al., 1995; Sternberg et al., in preparation) characterize this knowledge as tacit. First, it is acquired while performing everyday activities, but typically without conscious awareness of what is being learned. This type of learning is reflected in the common language of the workplace as people speak of "learning by doing" and of "learning by osmosis." Second, although people's actions may reflect their knowledge, they may find it difficult to articulate what they know. Terms like *professional intuition* and *professional instinct* denote the tacit quality of the knowledge associated with successful performance.

The following story told by a leader of a U.S. Army battalion illustrates this type of knowledge:

I noticed that my subordinate commanders were trying so hard to be successful that they would accept missions that their units did not have the capabilities to execute. The commanders would expend a great deal of their units' effort and time to accomplish the mission without asking for help in order to demonstrate their talents as leaders. One of my commanders worked his unit overtime for two weeks to accomplish a mission. I realized that the same mission could have been accomplished in two days if the commander had requested additional resources. After that incident, I make it a point to ask all my subordinate commanders to realistically assess their units' resources before taking on a mission.

The leader in the above example learned that subordinates may go to great lengths to impress their superiors and that these efforts may impede efficiency. He learned also that one way to minimize inefficiency is to ask subordinates to evaluate their resources before initiating tasks. Through his observations he gained useful knowledge about how to be a more effective leader in the area of subordinate supervision. But without prompting, this knowledge may not have been brought to light. Studying the tacit knowledge that successful leaders possess offers a method for understanding what and how leaders develop through their everyday operational assignments.

Overview of the Tacit Knowledge in Military Leadership Project

The Tacit Knowledge in Military Leadership project is a collaborative effort between researchers at Yale University, the U.S. Military Academy, and the U.S. Army Research Institute to discover what successful leaders know about how to lead and to use this insight to recommend ways to develop effective leaders. The primary goals of the project have been: (1) to identify the tacit knowledge of effective military leaders, (2) to construct inventories to measure the possession of tacit knowledge, (3) to validate these measures against indicators of leadership effectiveness, and (4) to recommend ways to apply the products and insights from the tacit knowledge work to leadership development. The results of this work can be found in several research reports (Hedlund et al., 1998; Horvath, Forsythe, et al., 1994; Horvath, Williams, et al., 1994; Horvath et al., 1996). In the present report, we present some of the lessons learned from this work about military leadership at three organizational levels: platoon, company, and battalion. In particular, this report delves into the specific knowledge of leaders at each of these levels and how this knowledge pertains to different aspects of leadership effectiveness.

To provide some background for the knowledge that is presented in this report, we first discuss briefly what tacit knowledge is and summarize the key findings of this project.

What is Tacit Knowledge?

A large body of research has shown that learning from experience has an implicit or "behind the scenes" quality and that much of the knowledge acquired in this way is of a hidden or "tacit" nature. The term *tacit knowledge* is used to characterize knowledge with certain features. These features of tacit knowledge relate to (a) the conditions under

which it is acquired, (b) its underlying cognitive representation, and (c) the conditions of its use.

First, tacit knowledge generally is acquired on one's own with little support from the environment (e.g., through personal experience rather than through instruction). By environmental support, we mean either people or media that help the individual to acquire the knowledge. When people or media support the acquisition of knowledge, typically they help identify what information is important, how the information should be interpreted, and how it relates to existing knowledge (Sternberg, 1988). When the individual acquires knowledge on his or her own, he or she needs to determine what information to attend to, what it means, and how it relates to prior knowledge. Under such circumstances, it is likely that some individuals will fail to acquire the appropriate knowledge. Knowledge acquired on one's own also is less likely to be widely shared than knowledge acquired through supported means (e.g., reading a leadership manual).

Second, tacit knowledge is viewed as procedural in structure. It is associated with particular uses in particular situations or classes of situations. Tacit knowledge takes the form of "knowing how" rather than "knowing that." The articulated form of experience-based knowledge reveals this procedural structure. Individuals often express the knowledge in terms of abstract or summary representations of a family of complexly specified procedural rules (e.g., rules about how to judge people accurately for a variety of purposes and under a variety of circumstances). We represent this knowledge in the form of complex, context-specific condition—action pairings. For example, knowledge about confronting one's superior might be represented in a form with a compound condition:

*IF <you are in a public forum>
AND
IF <the boss says something or does something that you perceive is wrong or inappropriate >
AND
IF <the boss does not ask for questions or comments>
THEN <speak directly to the point of contention and do not make evaluative statements about your boss, staff, or your peer's character or motives>
BECAUSE <this saves the boss from embarrassment and preserves your relationship with him.>*

The third feature of tacit knowledge pertains to its use. It is instrumental to pursuing personally-valued goals. For example, knowing that seeking input from subordinates makes them feel valued is practically useful for those supervisors who want their subordinates to feel valued, but not practically useful for supervisors who do not value this goal. Although knowledge acquired through any means may be practically useful, the way in which tacit knowledge is acquired increases its personal relevance. Furthermore, when knowledge must be acquired on one's own, the probability increases that some individuals will fail to acquire it. When some individuals fail to acquire

knowledge, those who succeed may gain a comparative advantage.

To summarize, tacit knowledge generally is acquired on one's own, is action-oriented, and is practically relevant. As a whole, tacit knowledge helps people to adapt to, select, and shape environments in the pursuit of their goals. It has been shown to be important to successful performance in a number of professional domains (Sternberg et al., 1995).

As we have defined it, tacit knowledge should be of particular advantage in complex and dynamic environments in which individuals must be able to learn on the job and adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. We considered tacit knowledge to be a promising factor in understanding successful military leadership, and set out to discover the important lessons of leadership experience.

Studying the Tacit Knowledge of Military Leaders

The main goals of the project were to: (1) identify the content of tacit knowledge for military leaders, (2) develop instruments to assess leaders' knowledge, (3) assess the relationship of this knowledge to leadership effectiveness, and (4) offer recommendations for leadership development. The first stage in the project involved gathering examples of "lessons learned" from military publications and from interviews with Army leaders (see Horvath, Williams, et al., 1994). The literature consisted of formal doctrine, trade journals, educational publications, and military memoirs, and provided preliminary indicators of the tacit knowledge of military leaders. The knowledge pertained to functions at the intrapersonal level (i.e., dealing with oneself), interpersonal level (i.e., dealing with others), and organizational level (i.e., dealing with the organization). More specifically, intrapersonal tacit knowledge pertained to managing the self (e.g., how to manage one's time) and seeking challenges and control (e.g., how to take initiative). Interpersonal tacit knowledge pertained to influencing and controlling others (e.g., motivating subordinates), supporting and cooperating with others (e.g., taking care of soldiers), and learning from others (e.g., keeping an open mind). Organizational tacit knowledge pertained to solving organizational problems (e.g., understanding the organization's culture).

Although the literature provided some insight about military knowledge, we relied primarily on interviews to substantiate our understanding of leadership tacit knowledge. We conducted interviews with a representative sample of 81 Army officers who were selected by their senior commanders to participate in the study (see Horvath, Forsythe, et al., 1994). The sample included 30 platoon leaders, 32 company commanders, and 19 battalion commanders from all three categories of military specialties (combat arms, combat support, and combat service support). During the interviews, participants were asked to relate stories about a job-related experience from which they learned something about leadership at their current organizational level. The stories were compiled and reviewed by members of the research team to determine if the knowledge met the definition of tacit. The knowledge was designated as tacit knowledge for leadership if it (a) was based in a personal experience, (b) was not well supported by formal training or

doctrine, and (c) expressed some form of action. We only included knowledge pertaining to interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of leadership, excluding knowledge of a purely technical or tactical nature.

For ease of later analysis, each example of tacit knowledge was rewritten into a standard format (i.e., complex condition--action statements) representing the procedural structure described above. The interviews produced 174 unique items of tacit knowledge. Three senior military members of the research team, with 72 years of experience combined, were asked to sort the set of 174 items into categories of tacit knowledge. These categories, which we discuss in detail in the next section of this report, provided insight into the key challenges leaders encounter at each organizational level.

From the 174 tacit-knowledge items, we sought to identify a subset at each level for use in developing a measurement instrument. The items were distributed across organizational levels as follows: 66 from platoon leaders, 67 from company commanders, and 49 from battalion commanders. We asked two separate samples to rate the quality of the items in terms of their relevance to effective leadership. In the first sample, these ratings were examined in relation to the respondent's designation as a novice or expert leader. Respondents were officers attending one of six TRADOC schools. Items that expert leaders rated differently than novice leaders were considered more useful for assessing tacit knowledge. In the second sample, the ratings were examined in relation to ratings of effectiveness provided for each respondent from subordinates, peers, and superiors. Respondents were leaders in FORSCOM units. Items that were rated differently by more effective than less effective leaders were considered useful for assessing tacit knowledge.

In the next stage of the project, 15 to 20 items were selected for each level from which to develop a tacit-knowledge inventory. Items were chosen that best represented the categories of tacit knowledge and distinguished best between expert and novice leaders and between more and less effective leaders. Each selected item was expanded into a scenario that posed a leadership problem and 5 to 15 possible responses to the problem. Participants are asked to rate the quality or appropriateness of each alternative solution to the problem. An example question is shown in Table 1. The questions were reviewed by military experts and revised based on their feedback. Three versions of the inventory, one each for platoon leaders, company commanders, and battalion commanders, were compiled for further evaluation.

Table 1.

Sample Question from the Tacit Knowledge for Military Leaders Inventory (TKML).

Tacit Knowledge for Military Leaders Company Commander Questionnaire								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Extremely Bad		Somewhat Bad		Neither Bad Nor Good		Somewhat Good		Extremely Good

You are a company commander, and your battalion commander is the type of person who seems always to "shoot the messenger"--he does not like to be surprised by bad news, and he tends to take his anger out on the person who brought him the bad news. You want to build a positive, professional relationship with your battalion commander. What should you do?

_____ Speak to your battalion commander about his behavior and share your perception of it.

_____ Attempt to keep the battalion commander "over-informed" by telling him what is occurring in your unit on a regular basis (e.g., daily or every other day).

_____ Speak to the sergeant major and see if she/he is willing to try to influence the battalion commander.

_____ Keep the battalion commander informed only on important issues, but don't bring up issues you don't have to discuss with him.

_____ When you bring a problem to your battalion commander, bring a solution at the same time.

_____ Disregard the battalion commander's behavior: Continue to bring him news as you normally would.

_____ Tell your battalion commander all of the good news you can, but try to shield him from hearing the bad news.

_____ Tell the battalion commander as little as possible; deal with problems on your own if at all possible.

In order to assess the extent to which tacit knowledge relates to effective leadership, we conducted a validation study (see Hedlund et al., 1998). The three versions of the Tacit Knowledge Inventory for Military Leaders (TKML) were administered respectively to samples of platoon leaders, company commanders, and battalion commanders from 44 intact battalions. For each question, participants rated the quality of several possible responses to the situation described. In order to evaluate the amount of tacit knowledge the leaders possessed, their ratings were compared to those of an expert group for their respective level. For example, in the scenario shown in Table 1, respondent A may rate the option "Speak to your battalion commander about his behavior and share your perception of it" a 7 (somewhat good) while respondent B may rate the option a 3 (somewhat bad). If the expert company commanders on average rated this

response option a 6, respondent A would obtain a better tacit-knowledge score than respondent B.

To assess the relationship of tacit knowledge to leadership effectiveness, members of intact battalions were asked to rate the effectiveness of all other officers who completed the TKML. Therefore, ratings were obtained (with two exceptions) from subordinates, peers, and superiors. Ratings were not obtained from the peers of battalion commanders or the subordinates of platoon leaders. Raters were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of each leader on three dimensions: overall, task, and interpersonal leadership.

At all three levels, we found that either the overall score on the tacit-knowledge inventory or scores on subsets of questions significantly related to leadership effectiveness as perceived by one or more sources. Platoon leaders and battalion commanders with higher tacit-knowledge scores were rated as more effective by their superiors. Company commanders with higher tacit-knowledge scores were rated as more effective by their peers. In addition, we found that scores on two subscales of tacit knowledge for company commanders were significantly related to effectiveness. Company commanders with higher tacit-knowledge scores on questions about dealing with the boss were rated more effectively by their superiors (i.e., battalion commanders), and those with higher tacit-knowledge scores on questions about motivating and developing subordinates were rated as more effective by their subordinate platoon leaders. When we examined these relationship across all three levels, we consistently found that subordinates who scored higher on the TKML were rated as more effective by their superiors.

In addition to the TKML, each participant also completed a test of verbal ability (Concept Mastery Test [Terman, 1950]), a Tacit Knowledge Inventory for Managers (TKIM; Wagner & Sternberg, 1991), and provided data on their experience (months in current job). These other measures allowed us to assess the extent to which tacit knowledge is distinct from other constructs and how well it explains individual variation in leadership effectiveness relative to these other variables. Scores on the Concept Mastery Test and TKIM exhibited low to modest relationships with scores on the TKML, indicating that the latter measures something distinct from verbal ability or tacit knowledge for managers. Furthermore, for all cases in which the TKML scores related significantly to leadership effectiveness, they explained variation in leadership effectiveness above and beyond Concept Mastery Test scores and TKIM scores. In other words, tacit knowledge for military leaders adds to our understanding of leadership effectiveness above verbal ability and tacit knowledge for managers.

Finally, we examined the relationship of tacit knowledge to leadership effectiveness across levels to determine if one's own level of tacit knowledge had an influence on how one rated other leaders. The only condition in which the TKML score of the raters affected their ratings was when subordinates were rating their superiors. That is, subordinates with higher TKML scores gave higher ratings to their superiors. This finding may indicate that subordinates with greater tacit knowledge have a different

perception of what effective leadership is at the next level of command.

The efforts summarized above helped generate a body of knowledge and established the relevance of tacit knowledge to effective leadership. The next step in this work is to determine how to apply these findings to leadership development. One direction currently being pursued involves exploring ways to enhance the learning experiences and improve the knowledge-acquisition skills of leaders so that they may acquire their own personally-relevant tacit knowledge. Another direction is to use the wealth of information generated from this project to develop a pool of knowledge about effective and ineffective leadership that can be shared with other leaders. The remainder of this report presents the lessons learned about leadership that emerged across and within organizational levels.

Leadership Knowledge across Organizational Levels

The U.S. Army's definition of leadership varies somewhat across organizational levels (see U.S. Department of the Army 1987a, 1987b, 1990). For example, leadership at junior levels (through battalion command) is defined as "the process of influencing others to accomplish the mission by providing purpose, direction, and motivation" (U.S. Department of the Army, 1990, p. 1). At the next level (brigade through corps), leadership is viewed as an influence process in which direct and indirect means are used to create conditions for the sustained success of an organization. At the highest levels, leadership is defined as obtaining the commitment of subordinates to the organization's purposes and goals, beyond that which is possible using position power alone.

Our work addressed leadership at the junior levels (platoon, company and battalion command). In examining the tacit knowledge of leaders at these three levels, we observed both common themes and distinct categories in the knowledge that emerged across levels. We discuss how these categories compare to the general dimensions of leadership identified by other researchers and what these categories tell us about leadership at different organizational levels.

Tacit Knowledge and General Leadership Frameworks

The categorization of tacit knowledge that emerged from our study does not provide an entirely novel view of leadership. In fact, it has a number of similarities with existing frameworks or taxonomies for studying leadership. The distinctions lie in the relative emphasis of each of these categories across leadership levels. The categories of tacit knowledge are shown in Table 2. The percentage of tacit-knowledge items that represented each category are shown in columns 2 through 4.

Table 2
Categories of Tacit Knowledge with Proportion of Items Obtained by Level

Category	Level		
	Battalion (<u>n</u> =67)	Company (<u>n</u> =64)	Platoon (<u>n</u> =42)
Dealing with poor performers	.06	--	--
Managing organizational change	.04	--	--
Protecting the organization	.13	--	--
Balancing mission and troops	--	.08	--
Cooperating with others	--	.06	--
Directing and supervising subordinates	--	.16	--
Establishing credibility	--	--	.12
Developing subordinates	.18	.06	--
Influencing the boss	--	.08	.14
Communicating	.15	.13	.13
Establishing trust	.07	.08	.07
Managing the self	.07	.09	.19
Motivating subordinates	.09	.14	.28
Taking care of soldiers	.14	.12	.05
Unaffiliated items	.07	.00	.02

The action-oriented feature of tacit knowledge allows for comparisons between the categories of tacit knowledge and taxonomies of leadership behaviors. We use primarily the "managerial practices" taxonomy of Yukl and his colleagues (Yukl, 1998; Yukl, Wall, & Lepsinger, 1990) as a basis for comparison. The most recent version of this taxonomy (Yukl, 1998) identifies 14 leader behaviors ("managerial practices") that are considered generalizable to most leaders. These behaviors include: planning and organizing, problem solving, clarifying roles and objectives, informing, monitoring, motivating and inspiring, consulting, delegating, supporting, developing and mentoring, managing conflict and team building, networking, recognizing, and rewarding.

A number of the tacit-knowledge categories shown in Table 2 can be related to the leader behaviors identified by Yukl (1998). For example, the category "directing and supervising subordinates" shares many defining characteristics with "planning and organizing" such as coordinating, organizing units, and managing training assignments. Yukl's description, however, includes tasks that are more characteristic of managerial roles (e.g., resource allocation). The category "developing subordinates" is comparable to behaviors associated with "developing and mentoring," while "taking care of soldiers" is consistent with behaviors related to "supporting." Behaviors associated with "problem solving" are found distributed throughout the tacit-knowledge categories, but are especially characteristic of "dealing with poor performers." The single tacit-knowledge category of "motivating subordinates" seems to cover the three dimensions of "motivating," "rewarding," and "recognizing" in Yukl's taxonomy. "Communicating" in the tacit-knowledge framework also appears to cover a broad range of behaviors,

including "clarifying roles and objectives," "informing," "monitoring," and "consulting." Behaviors associated with "delegating" and "networking" were not readily apparent in the tacit-knowledge categories and may be less relevant to leaders at the levels we studied.

Not all of the tacit-knowledge categories easily fit into one of Yukl's (1998) leader behaviors. Some of these categories, however, are comparable to behaviors identified in other leadership frameworks. The category of "managing the self" includes behaviors that are consistent with theories of self-management and self-leadership (Manz & Sims, 1980; Markham & Markham, 1995), such as setting goals and taking initiative to accomplish them, regulating one's thoughts and emotions, and providing self-reinforcement. The categories of "establishing credibility" and "establishing trust" are not found as major dimensions in existing behavioral taxonomies. But the issues they represent are found in some theories. The issue of credibility is addressed by leadership approaches that focus on how leaders gain influence over their followers--in other words, how they acquire power. Increasing one's knowledge and skills is considered a source of expert power, while demonstrating respect is viewed as a source of referent power (French & Raven, 1959). The issue of trust is also discussed as a source of power and appears in theories of transformational leadership (e.g., Bass & Avolio, 1993). But in none of these theories are the issues of credibility and trust represented as major dimensions of leadership. The emergence of "establishing credibility" and "establishing trust" as separate tacit-knowledge categories may indicate that these are more prominent concerns among military than civilian leaders.

Although we found a number of overlapping categories between the tacit-knowledge framework and the managerial practices taxonomy, even Yukl acknowledged that the relative importance of each of these behaviors might vary across different types of managers or leaders. In work using an earlier version of this taxonomy, Yukl and Van Fleet (1982) found variability in the importance of these leader behaviors across noncombat and combat situation. For example, they found more instances of behaviors related to consideration in the noncombat situation and more behaviors related to problem solving and planning in the combat situation.

General frameworks are useful for organizing information about the knowledge and behaviors of leaders and for drawing comparisons across settings. But understanding what dimensions are important and what specific behaviors are effective with particular leaders in particular situations requires a more specific type of analysis. As is apparent from looking at Table 2, we observed differences in the tacit knowledge that emerged at each leadership level. We turn to a discussion of what these differences mean in terms of the specific roles of leaders at the three organizational levels addressed.

Tacit Knowledge at Different Levels of Leadership

Table 2 shows the proportion of the total tacit-knowledge items that comprised the category at each organizational level. For example, items from the category "Protecting the organization" made up 9 of the 67 total items obtained from battalion

commanders, yielding a proportion of .13. This value means that 13% of the tacit-knowledge items at the battalion level related to knowledge of how to protect the organization. A blank in the table means that the category was not represented in the tacit-knowledge obtained for that level. For example, the category "Protecting the organization" emerged at the battalion but not the company or platoon level. In five cases the category was shared across all three levels. These categories included: communicating, establishing trust, managing the self, motivating subordinates, and taking care of soldiers. Two categories, "developing subordinates" and "influencing the boss," were common across two levels but not across all three levels. Three categories were unique to battalion commanders: dealing with poor performers, managing organizational change, and protecting the organization. Three categories were unique to company commanders: balancing mission and troops, cooperating with others, and directing and supervising subordinates. Finally, one category was unique to platoon leaders: establishing credibility.

Although many of the categories were shared across levels, the specific knowledge composing those categories varied somewhat. As we discuss below, the specific knowledge sheds light on the key development challenges of leaders at different levels in the organization.

Platoon leaders. Platoon leaders have very limited experience in Army leadership (typically one to three years) and are responsible for supervising soldiers (approximately 25-45 in number) who have relatively greater time in service. They exercise direct leadership through face-to-face interactions with their subordinates and with relatively little formal position power. The tacit knowledge of platoon leaders reflects their limited experience and formal position power, as well as their direct form of leadership (e.g., through face-to-face interaction). Key descriptions of the tacit knowledge representing each category for platoon leaders are shown in Table 3. Of the knowledge we uncovered at the platoon level, 28% was about motivating subordinates. Motivating relatively more experienced subordinates without much formal authority also raises issues of personal credibility for platoon leaders. Platoon leaders must also establish credibility with the boss if they are to protect their limited autonomy. We found that tacit knowledge about establishing credibility was unique to the platoon level. Tacit knowledge about managing the self was also more frequent at the platoon level than at higher levels (company and battalion), which may reflect the stress of establishing credibility and authority over more experienced soldiers.

Table 3.

Category Descriptions of Tacit Knowledge for Platoon Leaders

Category	Keyword Descriptions
Motivating subordinates	maintaining consistency in their lives; meeting their basic needs; preventing boredom; recognizing their limits; building their confidence; providing support
Influencing the boss	confronting superiors when you disagree with their directives; clarifying role expectations; taking initiative
Managing self	seeking feedback; managing stress; monitoring your performance
Establishing trust	giving subordinates responsibility; being open and honest with subordinates
Establishing credibility	showing respect and listening to more experience soldiers; improving one's own knowledge and skills
Communicating	seeking information from subordinates; targeting messages to the appropriate level; using the chain-of-command
Taking care of soldiers	dealing with personal problems; managing training demands

Company commanders. Company commanders have considerably more experience and position power than platoon leaders. They are responsible for deciding how missions will be accomplished. They lead organizations of typically 120 to 200 soldiers, and as a result have less direct contact with their subordinates than platoon leaders. The tacit knowledge of company commanders reflects the greater power and discretion associated with their position. Key descriptions of the tacit knowledge representing each category for platoon leaders are shown in Table 4. At this level, we observed the emergence of tacit knowledge about directing and supervising others. Tacit knowledge about establishing credibility, however, was not as important. The role of a company commander also requires the incumbent to consider the needs of subordinates and simultaneously to coordinate with higher headquarters. This is apparent in the distinct knowledge at the company level about cooperating with others and balancing mission accomplishments with the needs of subordinates.

Table 4.
Category Descriptions of Tacit Knowledge for Company Commanders

Category	Keyword Descriptions
Taking care of soldiers	showing concern for their well-being; dealing with personal problems
Directing and supervising subordinates	coordinating; encouraging cooperation; organizing units; managing training assignments; encouraging subordinates to take initiative; holding subordinates accountable
Cooperating with others	networking; developing cooperation and trust among peers
Establishing trust	protecting soldiers; keeping soldiers informed; seeking additional information before making decisions
Managing self	seeking feedback; managing stress; seeking social support; setting goals; reflecting on mistakes; relying on internal rewards for motivation
Communicating	communicating expectations; seeking information from subordinates; targeting messages to the appropriate level
Motivating subordinates	providing rewards/recognition; encouraging them to take initiative; using persuasion when appropriate
Developing subordinates	engaging them in decision making
Balancing mission and troops	resolving conflicts between orders from superiors and the welfare of subordinates
Influencing the boss	confronting superiors when you disagree with their directives; seeking autonomy

Battalion commanders. Battalion commanders have considerable experience in the Army, having served between 16 to 20 years as officers. Their selection for command is the result of a highly competitive process. They have considerable power and discretion in discharging the legal authority of command. They command organizations of typically 500 to 700 soldiers, making it difficult to interact with subordinates face to face. Key descriptions of the tacit knowledge representing each category for battalion commanders are shown in Table 5. The tacit knowledge of battalion commanders reflects their considerable experience and authority and their concern with more system-wide issues. As such we found that tacit knowledge for protecting the organization and managing organizational change was unique to battalion commanders. We also found that the tacit knowledge about communicating differed

from that obtained at lower levels. Specifically, battalion commanders learned to use indirect methods and systems of communication, and these communications were oriented primarily toward conveying the organization's mission and values. Finally, knowledge about dealing with poor performers was unique to battalion commanders, which can be attributed to the greater authority and discretion they possess to deal with personnel issues.

Table 5.

Category Descriptions of the Tacit Knowledge for Battalion Commanders

Category	Keyword Descriptions
Developing subordinates	allowing them to solve their own problems; providing them with opportunities to gain experience; counseling them on their mistakes; helping them identify their strengths and weaknesses
Managing organizational change	using subordinates as change agents
Protecting the organization	exhibiting loyalty; encouraging trust; protecting subordinates from unreasonable external demands
Motivating subordinates	providing rewards/recognition; engaging them in decision making
Taking care of soldiers	providing support; managing their work load; making their living quarters comfortable; showing concern for their well-being; dealing with personal problems
Communicating	imparting values; visioning; correcting misperceptions; communicating expectations
Managing self	seeking feedback; managing stress; managing emotions; monitoring your performance
Dealing with poor performers	solving problems; deciding when to relieve an officer of his/her duty

The differences we observed across levels are consistent with the way in which top-, middle- and low-level leaders have been characterized in the literature (e.g., Katz & Kahn, 1978). Low-level leaders are responsible for the day-to-day operations in their unit and engage in direct supervision of their subordinates. Middle-level leaders are responsible for interpreting and implementing directives from higher levels. Top-level leaders are concerned with strategy and vision. Some of these differences were most noticeable in moving from company to battalion-level command. The unique tacit knowledge of battalion commanders includes behaviors such as communicating a vision,

helping subordinates identify strengths and weaknesses, using subordinates as change agents, and showing concern for soldiers' well being. These behaviors indicate a shift toward more organizational concerns, which is characteristic of upper-level leadership.

Beyond these general categories, greater insight about leadership can be gained by examining the specific stories from which the knowledge emerged. Although the items of tacit knowledge may share similar themes, each item is unique in its content. The specific items are informative of the types of situations leaders encounter at each organizational level. Also, the data gathered as part of our research offers insight about the kinds of actions that are viewed as more and less effective in those situations. Leaders may learn that there may be no "right" or "one best" answer that applies in a situation. The "best" answer may depend on how the situation is interpreted by the leader or how the response is perceived by others. For example, a leader who endorses the option "ignore a directive from your commanding officer in order to protect your soldiers" may be considered highly effective by his subordinates, but his endorsement of this option may be associated with a low effectiveness rating from his superior. In the remainder of the report we use the data collected on the TKML to share insights about what responses are considered to be more and less effective for a representative set of leadership situations at platoon, company, and battalion levels.

Tacit Knowledge of Platoon Leaders

Below are situations representative of the experiences of platoon leaders. The situations are taken from the TKML instrument described above. The situations are organized according to the category framework shown in Table 3. For each situation we present a number of possible response alternatives. These responses are presented as more and less effective strategies for dealing with the situation based on different perspectives. The first perspective is that of an expert group who rated the quality of each alternative. The expert group consisted of 50 students at the Command and General Staff College (CGSC). These 50 CGSC students were promotable captains selected "below the zone" for major and attending CGSC based at least in part on their demonstrated excellence as platoon leaders. We present alternatives that a majority (70% or more) of the experts considered to be either good or bad responses to the situation.

The second perspective is based on the responses of 368 platoon leaders from six different U.S. Army posts and their effectiveness as rated by their peers (other platoon leaders) and their superiors (their company commanders). We present alternatives for which platoon leaders' responses were significantly associated with their effectiveness ratings. That is, platoon leaders who endorsed these options were rated as much more or much less effective by their peers or superiors. These different perspectives provide some insight about effective leadership at the platoon level.

Motivating Subordinates

Scenario P1. You are a new platoon leader. The battalion you support is preparing to conduct a night move. You assemble your platoon and tell everyone to start packing equipment in preparation for the move that same night. When you come back to inspect their movement preparation, you find that your soldiers have not packed the equipment and are talking to personnel from other platoons, who are hanging around the area.

According to the experts, you should....

- Take charge of the situation, get your unit moving, then talk to the NCOs to bring the chain of command online.
- Assemble your squad leaders and talk about the situation.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Wait and see if the soldiers do the task later on their own.
- Speak to the soldiers in a friendly manner without emphasizing your authority as their leader.
- Warn the platoon sergeant that you will consider using punishment (such as an Article 15) if the platoon does not pull things together immediately.

Your superior will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Wait and see if the soldiers do the task later on their own.
- Warn the platoon sergeant that you will consider using punishment (such as an Article 15) if the platoon does not pull things together immediately.

Scenario P9. You are an engineer platoon leader training with your soldiers. One squad is given the mission to put in a minefield for the Infantry battalion. You pick the second squad because they are good soldiers, have better equipment, and are better trained to do the job. But the squad is exhausted and the soldiers really complain. They note that it is nearing the end of the exercise and they are very tired. You tell them what you want done and you make the standards clear. When you return to check, the minefield is not up to standard and the squad is sitting around eating. You talk to the squad leader, and point out that the minefield is not up to standard. He tells you in front of the squad that the squad is not interested in your standards and that what they have done is the best you are going to get.

According to the experts, you should...

- Say that you recognize they are tired, but tell the soldiers that the task must be completed, and ask what assistance you can arrange for to help them get the task done.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Assume that the soldiers are overworked and let them off the hook this time--do not make them complete the task.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Try to convince the squad leader and soldiers that you will not give them another mission until they have had a chance to rest, but that they must bring the minefield up to standard.

Your superior will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Punish the squad leader by recommending him for an Article 15 for mouthing off to you about the soldiers not caring about your standards.
- Order the soldiers to stop eating immediately and complete the task, and threaten punishment if they do not comply.

Scenario P11. Your platoon has been working on building a range for 17 months. The assignment has been unpleasant. One reason for this is that the range site is more than an hour's drive away from the Army post. Suddenly, you are told that your platoon has to finish the project in the next three weeks. This will mean that you will have to stay out at the range and work nights, all in the summer heat of Georgia. Your goal is to keep your soldiers motivated.

According to the experts, you should...

- Tell the soldiers what to expect so they can plan ahead, even when you know the work will be unpleasant.
- Expose yourself to many of the same hardships as your soldiers by spending time with them in the hot sun, staying with them even when it is unpleasant, etc.
- Focus your efforts on providing for their basic needs--get them hot meals, weekends off, and ice in the field, for example.

- Do everything you can to get public recognition for your soldiers when the task is complete and they are back at the base--make sure everyone knows how hard they worked.
- Speak to your company commander and try to arrange for a more pleasant assignment to follow this unpleasant one, and then let your soldiers know what is to come to give them something to look forward to.
- Reward the soldiers for good work; let them know they are appreciated.
- Find out why the project is important, and then communicate these points to your soldiers to show them why their effort is meaningful.
- Give the soldiers a reward to look forward to, such as extra time off when the project is complete.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Expose yourself to many of the same hardships as your soldiers by spending time with them in the hot sun, staying with them even when it is unpleasant, etc.
- Focus your efforts on providing for their basic needs--get them hot meals, weekends off, and ice in the field, for example.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Empathize with the soldiers' situation and allow them to take steps to make themselves more comfortable, such as modifying their uniform.

Influencing the Boss

Scenario P2. You are a platoon leader, and your unit is training at the National Training Center. Your battery commander makes your howitzer sections dig individual positions every time you stop, even in the offense. The other batteries do not dig in as much as you do. The Observer Controllers (OCs) tell you that your sections dig good positions, but they question why you do this so much in the offense. The battery commander's order is making a big problem for you because your sections are under-strength, and digging in so much burns everyone out and has a bad effect on morale.

According to the experts, you should...

- Explain your view to the battery commander by talking in terms of Mission-Enemy- Terrain-Troops-and-Time (METT-T) and the effect of the decision on the unit's mission.

- Speak to the company first sergeant for advice and assistance.

According to the experts, you should not

- Based on the position of your troops, make a decision not to comply with the commander's directive on the basis of "mission first," then explain your actions after the fact.

Your superior will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Try to figure out on your own why the battery commander issued the directive and explain it to your soldiers.

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Explain your view to the battery commander by talking in terms of Mission-Enemy- Terrain-Troops-and-Time (METT-T) and the effect of the decision on the unit's mission.
- Tell the battery commander that his directive adversely impacts the unit's morale.

Scenario P3. You have spent two months working with your new battery commander. In his last position as the Fire Support Officer for an infantry battalion he supervised a shorthanded team. Consequently, he was required to perform many duties himself. Your commander still tries to stay involved in all of the day-to-day details of running the unit, and he generally delegates tasks less often than you would like. You believe that your commander is overburdened, and you are worried about the consequences of his time-management techniques.

According to the experts, you should...

- Help your battery commander to better manage his time in any way you can.
- Don't wait to be told what to do--anticipate what needs to be done, and if you are capable, do it.
- If something needs to be done but you can't do it, find someone else who can and get him/her involved--without being asked by the battery commander.
- Offer to take care of specific tasks before he mentions them to you.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Wait to take action on specific things until after he mentions them to you.

Your superior will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Wait to take action on specific things until after he mentions them to you.
- Assume this is just the way he is and do your best to get along.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Wait to take action on specific things until after he mentions them to you.
- Go to the first sergeant and/or executive officer and ask for suggestions about what to do about the commander's management style.

Managing Oneself

Scenario P4. During the live fire attack at the National Training Center, your tank platoon is in an overwatch position, as part of the observation post (OP) plan. You are supposed to wait to be called forward into the attack. From your position, you watch the artillery come in on the enemy positions. The smoke from the artillery obscures the enemy's view. At this point, you should move out--you should call your commanding officer and tell him you are moving while the enemy is blinded. Instead, you wait to be told to move out, as the OP plan called for. Consequently, you move after the smoke lifts, and you lose three tanks, including your own. You are angry with yourself and ashamed; you believe you should have known better.

According to the experts, you should...

- Think about this negative performance feedback from the NTC as a way to identify and repair your weaknesses.
- During the After Action Review, admit to your soldiers that you made a mistake; take responsibility for what happened.
- Reflect on the decision and determine what you should have done, in order to derive the lessons learned.
- During the After Action Review, describe your mistake to your subordinate leaders in order to develop and train them.
- Don't let the soldiers get down on themselves because of your decision--build up their confidence and encourage them.

- Discuss the issue with your company commander and convince your company commander to allow you the freedom to exercise initiative at certain times, like this one.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Reflect on the decision and determine what you should have done, in order to derive the lessons learned.

Your superior will tend to view you as less effective if...

- During the After Action Review, try to explain the reasons for your decision to your soldiers.

Scenario P5. You are a platoon leader, and one day your driver has a motivational problem while out in the field. He starts mouthing off to you while standing on top of the turret in front of the rest of the platoon. Everyone in the platoon is listening to what he's saying about you, and it is extremely negative and harsh.

According to the experts, you should not...

- In front of the platoon, order your driver to do an unpleasant task as punishment for his insubordination.
- Answer your driver back immediately and defend yourself by arguing your position.
- Do nothing; walk away and wait for your driver to blow off steam.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Do nothing; walk away and wait for your driver to blow off steam.

Scenario P8. You are a new platoon leader, and you are under a great deal of stress. Everyone is expecting a lot of you, and there never seem to be enough hours in the day to accomplish everything. There is a lot of competition for key awards and positions in the future, and other officers are working as hard as you are. At home, your family also needs your time and attention. Your goal is to manage your stress.

According to the experts, you should...

- Find a trustworthy military person or confidant (not your rater) to talk to about your frustrations and problems--someone who will provide you with honest feedback about your performance.

- Try not to take problems home from work.
- If tempted to take work home, ask yourself whether it is really critical, or whether I can wait until tomorrow.
- Remember to place your career in perspective by focusing on the many aspects of your life that matter in addition to your unit.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Find a trustworthy military person or confidant (not your rater) to talk to about your frustrations and problems--someone who will provide you with positive feedback about your performance.

Your superior will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Find a trustworthy military person or confidant (not your rater) to talk to about your frustrations and problems--someone who will provide you with honest feedback about your performance.

Scenario P13. You are a new second lieutenant. Due to numerous inactivations you have been assigned to the battalion staff until a platoon becomes available. You are somewhat intimidated about working with people who outrank you by such an extent--your direct boss is the battalion executive officer. However, as an officer, you know you have a job to do. Your goal is to establish yourself as an effective officer in your new position.

According to the experts, you should...

- Not try to act like you know it all.
- Check with other lieutenants or captains and hear their opinions and get their input on an issue before taking the issue to the boss.
- Be respectful when you speak to officers who outrank you.
- Approach competent officers directly, and ask frequently for their advice and help.
- Find out who the competent officers are by reputation, then seek out these individuals and use them as mentors and sources of advice.
- Concentrate on the facts you are trying to communicate when you speak to high-ranking officers--present the facts accurately and do not change what you are saying to avoid upsetting higher-ranking officer.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Are assertive; are not be afraid of using your rank.
- Are careful not to use words or say things that might offend people who outrank you.
- Concentrate on the facts you are trying to communicate when you speak to high-ranking officers--present the facts accurately and do not change what you are saying to avoid upsetting higher-ranking officer.

Scenario P14. You and your company commander don't talk about your performance very often. When you do, he usually blows up and chews you out, but never explains what you did wrong. In fact, you rarely know exactly what your company commander thinks of you or what he expects. He generally just tells you what he wants, and that's it. He never communicates with you concerning your overall performance or development.

According to the experts, you should...

- Recognize that cooperation among the lieutenants in a company is key to the success of a platoon leader, and make sure that you cooperate with the other platoon leaders.
- Use your fellow lieutenants as a social support group to determine if your experiences with the company commander are normal.
- Approach your company commander, explain that your goal is to do and be your best, and tactfully ask him for detailed performance feedback and developmental counseling.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Ask the first sergeant what the company commander says about you behind your back.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Recognize that cooperation among the lieutenants in a company is key to the success of a platoon leader, and make sure that you cooperate with the other platoon leaders.
- Use your fellow lieutenants as a social support group to determine if your experiences with the company commander are normal.

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Avoid talking to other officers about your complaints about your company commander--figure things out for yourself as best you can.

Your superior will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Ask the first sergeant what the company commander says about you behind your back.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Ask the first sergeant what the company commander says about you behind your back.
- Speak to another company commander about your problem and ask for his advice.
- Assume that when your boss is not chewing you out, it basically means that he is satisfied.

Scenario P15. You are a medical service platoon leader, and you have been in the unit for several months. You have frequently seen your peers yelling at soldiers when the soldiers make a mistake. You do the same thing when one of your squads does not follow the platoon's standardized load plan--and you really lose control. You believe you were out of line, and you did not achieve the desired results. You also believe that yelling at people is demeaning and wrong.

According to the experts, you should...

- Recognize that it is not appropriate to scream at people, and that there are other, more effective ways to handle situations.
- Think about how your superior officers' anger has or would affect you--try to put yourself in the shoes of the sergeant and the other soldiers.
- Ask yourself how other effective leaders at your level would have handled the situation, and make plans to modify your behavior accordingly in the future.
- Ask other platoon leaders whom you admire for their advice about handling similar situations in the future.

Your superior will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Write a note to yourself on your camouflage notebook that says "Control My Temper," in order to remind you to stay in control.
- Speak to the chaplain or a counselor about how you might better control your temper.

Establishing Trust

Scenario P6. Your battery commander makes a decision you do not agree with. You try speaking with him and stating your position as effectively as you can, but his mind is made up and he is not going to change his position. Other platoon leaders agree with you that the battery commander's decision is wrong.

According to the experts, you should...

- Speak to the battalion commander and ask for advice.
- Tell only your NCOs that you do not support the battery commander's decision, but ask for their help in implementing the decision anyway.
- Tell the NCOs that you do not support the battery commander's decision, and ask for their opinions and advice on how to handle the situation with the troops.
- Tell your platoon that you do not support the battery commander's decision, but ask for their cooperation in implementing the decision anyway.

Your superior will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Use the first sergeant or executive officer as a voice-piece for your ideas: Convince one of them to state your opinions to the battery commander.
- Tell only your NCOs that you support the battery commander's decision.
- Tell your platoon that you do not support the battery commander's decision, but ask for their cooperation in implementing the decision anyway.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Formulate the best possible argument that you can in support of the battery commander's decision, and then explain the decision to the platoon while asking for their support.

Establishing Credibility

Scenario P7. You are a new platoon leader who takes charge of your platoon when they return from a lengthy combat deployment. All members of the platoon are war veterans, but you did not serve in the conflict. In addition, you failed to graduate from Ranger School. You are concerned about building credibility with your soldiers.

According to the experts, you should...

- Not change procedures that work.
- Ask the members of the platoon to share their combat experience: Ask what they learned and how it can help the platoon.
- Work hard to get into excellent physical shape so that you excel in PT .
- Speak to your soldiers with a tone of voice that conveys respect for them.
- Study field manuals and military history in order to gain technical and tactical competence.
- Listen frequently to your soldiers; hear their views, opinions, comments, and suggestions.

According to the experts you should not...

- Tell your NCOs about all of the studying you have done to increase your competence.
- Announce right up front that you are in charge and the soldiers must accept this fact and treat you with appropriate respect.

Your superior will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Tell your NCOs about all of the studying you have done to increase your competence.
- Announce right up front that you are in charge and the soldiers must accept this fact and treat you with appropriate respect.

Taking Care of Soldiers

Scenario P10. You are a platoon leader, and your battalion requires the company to turn in training schedules six weeks in advance. But the battalion does not give you

six weeks notice on requirements. Thus, there are a lot of changes to the training schedule. The battalion tells you six weeks out is too far in the future to assign projects, yet they expect you to plan training six weeks out! The soldiers think that these changes in the schedule jerk them around and sometimes cause morale problems.

According to the experts, you should...

- Buffer the platoon from changes that take place higher up by filtering the information you give them about these changes--provide soldiers with as much stability and predictability as possible.
- Speak to your company commander about the disruptions caused by the changes in the schedule, and solicit his advice and assistance.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Tell your platoon to ignore the training schedule, since it changes so much.

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Don't publish your own short-term schedule because then soldiers will think with too short-term a focus and won't take the necessary time to prepare for classes, etc.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Tell your platoon to ignore the training schedule, since it changes so much.

Your superior will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Tell your platoon to ignore the training schedule, since it changes so much.
- Tell your soldiers to stop griping and worrying about the changes in the schedule-remind them that they always prepare their classes the night before anyway.
- Let the soldiers know the changes to the schedule are not your fault, and that you appreciate their need to be able to plan.

Scenario P12. You are a platoon leader, and you receive a new private. On his second day in your platoon, he says that he wants to kill himself. You refer the soldier to the Medical Health Center and the Chaplain. Soon after, you learn that the medical center has not assigned a person with relevant professional training to help the soldier. The Chaplain is not having much effect because the soldier is not religious. In general, you have doubts about the qualifications of the people assigned to help him. You are very concerned about this situation.

According to the experts, you should...

- Speak with your commanding officers, inform them of the situation, and ask their opinion.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Take immediate action yourself by sitting down and talking with the soldier and giving him 24 hours to decide if he wants to stay in the Army.

Tacit Knowledge of Company Commanders

Below are situations representative of the experiences of company commanders. The situations are taken from the TKML instrument described above and are organized according to the category framework shown in Table 4. For each situation we present responses that are considered to be more and less effective strategies for dealing with the situation based on different perspectives. The first perspective is that of an expert group who rated the quality of each alternative. The expert group consisted of 29 majors and lieutenant colonels attending the Pre-Command Course selected based on their success as company commanders. We present alternatives that a majority (70% or more) of the experts considered to be either good or bad responses to the situation.

The second perspective is based on the responses of 157 company commanders from six different U.S. Army posts and their effectiveness as rated by their subordinates (platoon leaders), peers (other company commanders) and their superiors (their battalion commanders). We present alternatives for which company commanders' responses were significantly associated with their effectiveness ratings. That is, company commanders who endorsed these options were rated as much more or much less effective by their subordinates, peers, or superiors. These different perspectives provide some insight about leadership at the company level.

Taking Care of Soldiers

Scenario C1. You take over a newly-formed company as a company commander. At the same time, the company also receives a new first sergeant, two new platoon leaders, two platoon sergeants, and a supply sergeant. You quickly begin to perceive that the soldiers in the company have a bad attitude regarding training. A few weeks after taking command, you deploy the unit to the field for a 21-day Field Training Exercise (FTX). There, you again observe (on the second day of the FTX) that the soldiers' performance is poor. For example, their stand-to procedures don't meet your standards.

According to the experts, you should....

- Call your key leaders together and communicate your training standards in terms of the company's METL.
- Sit down with your first sergeant, discuss the situation, and ask for his opinion.
- Speak to your platoon leaders as a group, but away from the soldiers, tell them your standards and show them how to deal with the stand-to problem.
- Get the first sergeant and the platoon leaders together to discuss the situation with you.
- Conduct an After Action Review on stand-to and define your criteria for success.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Call a company meeting, tell the platoon leaders to stand off to the side, ask the soldiers why their performance is poor, and listen to their reasons.
- Threaten disciplinary action to the entire company if the stand-to procedures are not performed well during your next inspection.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Speak to the battalion commander and get his advice and direction regarding the best way to handle the problem.

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Get the first sergeant and the platoon leaders together to discuss the situation with you.
- Call a company meeting fully involving the platoon leaders, ask the soldiers why their performance is poor, and listen to their reasons.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Speak with each of your platoon leaders individually and privately and tell each one to deal with the problem.
- Conduct an After Action Review on stand-to and define your criteria for success.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Call a company meeting, tell the platoon leaders to stand off to the side, ask the soldiers why their performance is poor, and listen to their reasons.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Call a company meeting, tell the platoon leaders to stand off to the side, ask the soldiers why their performance is poor, and listen to their reasons.

Directing and Supervising Subordinates

Scenario C2. You are an armor company commander on your final National Training Center (NTC) rotation as a company commander. Your company is cross-attached to a mechanized infantry battalion to form a task force. Before you deployed to the NTC, you were given a new platoon leader (and his platoon) who had been transferred from another company in order to get a second chance. You have reason to believe he is weak tactically. When the task force is organized into company teams, you are required to provide a platoon to an infantry company. You have been advised by your first sergeant to send this new platoon over to the infantry company.

According to the experts, you should...

- Talk to the first sergeant, ask him to explain the reasons for his opinion, and listen to these reasons closely before making a decision.
- Send the platoon you would normally send.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Send the new platoon leader and his platoon over to the infantry company

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Send your best tank platoon over to the infantry company.
- Tell your platoon sergeant to look out for the weak lieutenant.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Give the weak lieutenant specific step-by-step instructions regarding how to do his job.
- Speak to the soldiers in the poorly-performing platoon: Tell them you have confidence in their ability to perform well, and that to display your level of

confidence you are sending them over to the infantry company where they will represent your company.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Send the new platoon leader and his platoon over to the infantry company.
- Speak to your battalion commander and tell him that you were given this new, ill-prepared platoon leader before you deployed to the NTC, and ask for his direction in making your decision.

Scenario C16. You are a company commander with both military and civilian personnel in your unit. You have no E5 sergeants--instead, you have civilians doing supervisory jobs with soldiers working under them. You are experiencing problems in maintaining group cohesion: For example, civilians see soldiers taking off for training and wonder why they have to keep working; soldiers see civilians getting cash awards for good performance and wonder why they can't have similar awards; and so on. You must deal with these problems to keep your unit running smoothly.

According to the experts, you should...

- Educate the soldiers and the civilians about the differing requirements of their jobs: Tell your soldiers that they have contractual obligations and they must accept their situation; tell the civilians that their situation is different from the soldiers' situation.
- Form a morale committee composed of both civilian and military personnel to plan company social functions.
- Study your own procedures to ensure that you are being fair and equitable to both the civilian and the military personnel.
- Schedule outings, pot luck dinners, parties, and dining outs that include all members of the unit and their families.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Try to develop cohesion separately in the civilians and military members by having separate social functions.

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Create a sign-out roster, and have people sign out when they leave their place of duty, stating where exactly they are going and why.

- Study your own procedures to ensure that you are being fair and equitable to both the civilian and the military personnel.
- Schedule outings, pot luck dinners, parties, and dining outs that include all members of the unit and their families.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Study your own procedures to ensure that you are being fair and equitable to both the civilian and the military personnel.
- Schedule outings, pot luck dinners, parties, and dining outs that include all members of the unit and their families.

Cooperating with Others

Scenario C3. You are a company commander, and your battalion commander is the type of person who seems always to "shoot the messenger"--he does not like to be surprised by bad news, and he tends to take his anger out on the person who brought him the bad news. You want to build a positive, professional relationship with your battalion commander.

According to the experts, you should...

- When you bring a problem to your battalion commander, bring a solution at the same time.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Tell your battalion commander all of the good news you can, but try to shield him from hearing the bad news.
- Tell the battalion commander as little as possible; deal with problems on your own if at all possible.

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Speak to your battalion commander about his behavior and share your perception of it.

Scenario C6. You are a battery commander. Consequently, you work for both your battalion commander and the brigade commander whom you support. During preparation time for the National Training Center (NTC), you are also preparing for a

Battle Command Training Program (BCTP). Your battalion commander is interested in the BCTP, but the maneuver brigade commander wants you to focus on the NTC.

According to the experts, you should...

- Find out from the battalion commander what his priority is: Get your battalion commander's guidance and act accordingly.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Focus equally on the two training events.

Establishing Trust

Scenario C4. You are a company commander on a battalion-level field training exercise. Your unit has just completed a night move and has been in position for about two hours. At midnight, you learn that a weapon is missing. The platoon sergeant with responsibility for weapons is confident that he knows where the weapon is because he saw it during the sensitive-items check completed after he arrived. A sensitive-item report is due to brigade at 0400 hours.

According to the experts, you should...

- Immediately mobilize everyone in the unit, and conduct a 100% inventory followed by a hands-on search.
- Immediately notify the battalion commander and tell him your plans for finding the weapon and resolving the incident.

According to the experts, you should not...

- If you are confident the weapon will be found at first light, submit a sensitive item report stating that all weapons are accounted for.

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Immediately mobilize everyone in the unit, and conduct a 100% inventory followed by a hands-on search.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- If you are confident the weapon will be found at first light, submit a sensitive-item report stating that all weapons are accounted for.

Scenario C8. You are a new company commander who has just taken over your unit. One of your soldiers is leaving the army. The supply sergeant brings you a Report of Survey and a \$250 Statement of Charges for the soldier's missing TA-50 and asks you to sign one or the other. You talk to the soldier and learn that the equipment was lost on re-deployment and that the chain of command had not taken appropriate action. The soldier had notified the old commander three times in writing, saying that his equipment was missing--but the commander took no action because he did not want to submit a late Report of Survey. (The Battalion Commander also did not want any late reports of survey.) The soldier says he will sign the Statement of Charges because he just wants to get out.

According to the experts, you should ...

- In spite of his dislike for late reports, notify the battalion commander that you are initiating a late report of survey on the soldier's lost TA-50.
- Have the supply sergeant validate the statements made by collecting relevant information from the soldier and other sources, put this information together, and bring it to the battalion commander.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Allow the soldier to sign the Statement of Charges so that he can leave.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Initiate a late report of survey without first informing the battalion commander.
- Point out to the battalion commander that the chain of command failed to properly uphold its responsibility and failed the soldier, and explain that this situation must be rectified now.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Allow the soldier to sign the Statement of Charges so that he can leave.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Allow the soldier to sign the Statement of Charges so that he can leave.
- If the battalion commander is hard on company commanders who initiate late Reports of Survey, do not initiate the report.

Managing Self

Scenario C5. You are a company commander. Your battalion is training for gunnery. Currently, all of the companies are well-prepared to pass gunnery. There is a great deal of competition among the companies and all of the commanders have Officer Evaluation Reports (OERs) due in the next few months. You have an NCO (platoon sergeant) in your unit who just arrived from teaching gunnery at the branch school. He tells you about some advanced training techniques using available equipment that have significantly improved gunnery scores in other units. This information has not been made available to units in the field. After some practice with the techniques, you find that they significantly improve the scores of your sections.

According to the experts, you should...

- Share the information about the training techniques with the battalion commander, then tell all of the other company commanders.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Do nothing--allow the information about the training techniques to be passed through NCO channels if it comes up.
- Train your company using the information, execute gunnery--presumably beating all of your fellow company commanders--then tell everyone how you did it after the fact.
- Tell the platoon sergeant to keep close hold over the information about the training techniques so that only your company possesses this information.

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Initiate a meeting with all company commanders, platoon leaders, first sergeants, and platoon sergeants, and have your new platoon sergeant present and describe the techniques.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Initiate a meeting with all company commanders, platoon leaders, first sergeants, and platoon sergeants, and have your new platoon sergeant present and describe the techniques.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Do nothing--allow the information about the training techniques to be passed through NCO channels if it comes up.

- Train your company using the information, execute gunnery--presumably beating all of your fellow company commanders--then tell everyone how you did it after the fact.
- Tell the platoon sergeant to keep close hold over the information about the training techniques so that only your company possesses this information.

Scenario C19. You are a company commander on deployment. Your unit is sustaining continuous operations. You are feeling the stress of the many demands upon your time, but you want to maintain your mental effectiveness and readiness.

According to the experts, you should...

- Sleep.
- Use your peers as a sounding board and support group.
- Maintain contact with family and friends back home to keep you centered and remind you there's more to life than your job.
- Take time alone each day to think, regroup, and work through what's on your mind.
- Each day, reflect on your successes and on what you can do better in the future maintain a positive focus.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Take time alone each day to think, regroup, and work through what's on your mind.

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Use your peers as a sounding board and support group.
- Each day, reflect on your successes and on what you can do better in the future—maintain a positive focus.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Use your peers as a sounding board and support group.
- Each day, reflect on your successes and on what you can do better in the future—maintain a positive focus.

- Take time alone each day to think, regroup, and work through what's on your mind.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Take time alone each day to read inspirational books or materials.

Your superior will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Sleep.

Communicating

Scenario C11. You are a company commander with a new brigade commander. Before the new brigade commander took over, the battalion conducted After Action Reviews by critiquing each training task according to the Mission Training Plan. The new brigade commander asks to see how AARs are conducted in the brigade--he wants to find someone who does AARs improperly so he can use this individual as an example to show what needs to be improved. When the brigade commander observes you he says he does not like your AAR format and he feels you are critiquing instead of letting the soldiers talk. Thus, you must now develop a system for listening more to your soldiers while still maintaining an effective command.

According to the experts, you should...

- Ask yourself why you talk when you do and evaluate whether you need to speak at these times to optimally benefit your unit.
- Try listening at moments when you would customarily talk.
- When soldiers' safety is at risk, use directive leadership instead of listening.
- Whenever you have time, seek out your soldiers, ask them questions, and listen to their opinions and views.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Do not listen to soldiers when they lack the knowledge necessary to make a decision.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Listen to soldiers who are willing to express their opinions before a group.

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Schedule regular meetings with your NCOs when you just sit and talk about the unit—and make these meetings times when you do less talking and more listening.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Listen to soldiers who are willing to express their opinions before a group.
- Schedule regular meetings with your NCOs when you just sit and talk about the unit—and make these meetings times when you do less talking and more listening.
- Ask yourself why you talk when you do and evaluate whether you need to speak at these times to optimally benefit your unit.
- Whenever you have time, seek out your soldiers, ask them questions, and listen to their opinions and views.

Motivating Subordinates

Scenario C9. It is the first week of your command as a new company commander, and you want to establish yourself quickly as an effective leader. You have assessed the current physical training program, and you believe it could use a total overhaul in order to ensure that the company will meet the PT standards. Your company does not have a qualified master fitness trainer.

According to the experts, you should...

- Talk to your first sergeant and get his/her advice.
- Consult a fellow commander who has a solid fitness program for guidance and suggestions.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Speak with your battalion commander to get his/her suggestions regarding the PT overhaul before deciding on a course of action.

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Consult a fellow commander who has a solid fitness program for guidance and suggestions.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Speak with your battalion commander to get his/her suggestions regarding the PT overhaul before deciding on a course of action.

Scenario C10. You are a new company commander. The previous commander was a micromanager. This individual was extremely detail-oriented, gave very little positive feedback and often tore down the platoon leaders when even the slightest infraction occurred. For example, the old company commander noted one day that one of the platoon leaders was wearing a dirty soft-cap, and he called the entire platoon a disgrace. This behavior on the part of the outgoing company commander was very hard on the platoon leaders. Several developed nervous conditions such as ulcers and sleep problems. Your goal is to create a more positive leadership atmosphere in the unit.

According to the experts, you should...

- Give all unit members more responsibility than they had before, and hold them accountable.
- When you must give negative feedback to your platoon leaders, do so constructively, pointing out specific areas that need improvement and explaining how this improvement can be achieved.
- Allow the platoon leaders and their soldiers the benefit of the doubt--don't jump to negative conclusions.
- Assign work goals with clear milestones to all officers.
- Involve senior NCOs in the decision-making process.
- Give the platoon leaders frequent, specific positive feedback.
- Let your subordinates know your intent and then let them develop their own plans.
- Recognize soldiers' achievements with awards.
- Have positive expectations: State often that you believe that every member of the unit has the ability to perform well if he or she applies himself or herself and works hard.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Continue with the micromanagement style since it is common practice in the company, and relieve and/or replace the lieutenants who cannot handle the stress.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Involve senior NCOs in the decision-making process.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Give all unit members more responsibility than they had before, and hold them accountable.

Scenario C14. You are a company commander. You have a platoon leader who is causing you problems. Once he was cleaning his weapon on the mail loading dock and he pointed it at a civilian. Another time he was late to a range. He frequently argues with you and does not do what you ask him to do. This is a new problem for your first sergeant--he has never experienced this situation before. The behaviors are continuing and growing in severity to a point where the lieutenant is insubordinate.

According to the experts, you should...

- Deal with the situation immediately--do not let it fester.
- Establish regular sessions during which you counsel the platoon leader about his performance.
- If an instance of insubordinate behavior occurs between the two of you in private, immediately reprimand the platoon leader.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Counsel the platoon leader only when his/her performance warrants it.
- Wait awhile to see if the situation improves on its own.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- If an instance of insubordinate behavior occurs between the two of you in private, immediately reprimand the platoon leader.

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- If an instance of insubordinate behavior occurs between the two of you in private, immediately reprimand the platoon leader.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- If an instance of insubordinate behavior occurs between the two of you in private, immediately reprimand the platoon leader.
- Establish regular sessions during which you counsel the platoon leader about his performance.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Wait awhile to see if the situation improves on its own.

Developing Subordinates

Scenario C7. You are a new company commander. There are a lot of things you want to fix in the company. You have quickly become overwhelmed by the many pressures you face and the many demands on your time. You realize that you cannot possibly do everything. Your goal is to better manage your key leaders and your time so that you are able to accomplish more in the same amount of time.

According to the experts, you should...

- Use key leaders to solve problems by having them research alternatives in their area of responsibility that would solve the problems and report these alternatives to you.
- Learn to spot check by walking around the company area and getting a general idea of what's going on--don't feel compelled to check every single thing personally.

Scenario C13. You are a company commander with some relatively junior lieutenants. Your goal is to develop these lieutenants.

According to the experts, you should...

- Beginning early on, encourage the lieutenants to determine their own goals, and use this information during counseling sessions.
- Explain the big picture to the lieutenants regarding upcoming missions.

- Start a professional development program to assist the lieutenants in their growth.

According to the experts, you should not...

- When going on a mission, explain only their portion to the lieutenants.
- Don't share ideas with the lieutenants; make your own decisions and implement them.
- Have the lieutenants present for administrative punishments (Article 15s, etc.) only if their schedules allow it.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Involve the lieutenants only in those decisions that affect their platoons.

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Start a professional development program to assist the lieutenants in their growth.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Involve the lieutenants only in those decisions that affect their platoons.
- Start a professional development program to assist the lieutenants in their growth.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Involve the lieutenants only in those decisions that affect their platoons.
- Have the lieutenants present for administrative punishments (Article 15s, etc.) only if their schedules allow it.

Balancing Mission and Troops

Scenario C15. You are a company commander, and your battalion commander often gives directives that you believe are unreasonable. You have tried to give your commander input regarding these directives, but he has not listened to your input. The NCOs and soldiers also feel these orders are unreasonable, and the situation is causing you considerable stress. You have generally lost respect for the battalion commander. He gives you another order you believe is unreasonable.

According to the experts, you should...

- Go alone to the battalion commander and tell him/her you believe the order is unreasonable.
- Keep trying to give your battalion commander input regarding his unreasonable directives.
- Represent the orders as your own to your key subordinates.

According to the experts, you should not ...

- Let your key subordinates know this is not your directive but rather the commander's.
- Say that the system is to blame for the unreasonable order.
- Let your soldiers know that this is not your directive but rather the commander's.
- Get your key leaders together and go as a group to the battalion commander and say that the order is unreasonable.

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Go alone to the battalion commander and tell him/her you believe the order is unreasonable.
- Keep trying to give your battalion commander input regarding his unreasonable directives.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Let your key subordinates know this is not your directive but rather the commander's.
- Let your soldiers know that this is not your directive but rather the commander's.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Let your key subordinates know this is not your directive but rather the commander's.

Scenario C18. You are a company commander, and you believe that you have an incompetent battalion commander. This incompetence is both technical and tactical. Often this person issues directives that are not going to achieve the mission.

According to the experts, you should...

- Speak to the sergeant major and the executive officer, ask for any relevant information, and listen to their opinions.
- Communicate the battalion commander's intent (rather than his specific directive) and ensure that it is met.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Speak to the brigade commander about the problem, arming yourself with specific examples of incompetent directives.
- Explain to your subordinates that the battalion commander does not understand the area in question because it is not his primary specialty.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Infer the underlying intent of the directive, go to your commander, and inform him of your interpretation of the underlying intent and the steps being taken to achieve this intent.

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Infer the underlying intent of the directive, go to your commander, and inform him of your interpretation of the underlying intent and the steps being taken to achieve this intent.
- When provided with the next unworkable directive, go back to the commander immediately and try to help direct the commander's thinking onto more appropriate and workable solutions.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Infer the underlying intent of the directive and develop your own strategy to solve the problem and achieve the mission.

Your peers will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Continue to follow directives and let the chips fall where they may.

Influencing the Boss

Scenario C17. You are a company commander, and your unit is dispersed and is assigned to various garrison commands. Thus, you cannot possibly exercise direct control over your troops. The garrison commanders have non-judicial authority over your soldiers. You want to develop a good relationship with the garrison commanders. Your goal is to take care of your soldiers under these conditions.

According to the experts, you should...

- Talk to the garrison commanders whenever there is a problem with one of your subordinate leaders.
- Visit the local garrison commanders on a regular basis.
- Request extra resources (and do what you can to expedite the request) to help garrison commanders provide for your soldiers, if necessary.
- Coordinate with the garrison commanders whenever possible to ensure that your soldiers' needs are being met.
- Speak to your soldiers individually as often as you can to check up on how they are being treated.
- Check with the garrison commanders about the quality of support being provided to your soldiers.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Do not talk to the garrison commanders unless one of your subordinate leaders comes to you and tells you that there is a problem.

Your peers will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Speak to your soldiers individually as often as you can to check up on how they are being treated.
- Check with the garrison commanders about the quality of support being provided to your soldiers.

Tacit Knowledge of Battalion Commanders

Below are situations representative of the experiences of battalion commanders. The situations are taken from the TKML instrument described above and are organized according to the category framework shown in Table 5. For each situation we present responses that are considered to be more and less effective strategies for dealing with the situation based on different perspectives. The first perspective is that of an expert group who rated the quality of each alternative. The expert group consisted of 59 students at the Army War College who were designated as expert battalion commanders. We present alternatives that a majority (70% or more) of the experts considered to be either good or bad responses to the situation.

The second perspective is based on the responses of 31 battalion commanders from six different U.S. Army posts and their effectiveness as rated by their subordinates (company commanders) and their superiors (their brigade commanders). We present alternatives for which battalion commanders' responses were significantly associated with their effectiveness ratings. That is, battalion commanders who endorsed these options were rated as much more or much less effective by their subordinates or superiors. These different perspectives provide some insight about leadership at the battalion level.

Developing Subordinates

Scenario B1. You are a new battalion commander, and you want to develop detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of each of your company commanders. Your goal is to gain this information.

According to the experts, you should...

- Ask the command sergeant major, battalion XO, and operations officer for their assessment.
- Talk directly (in private) with the soldiers and ask them their opinions about the quality of their training, what they are learning, and other impressions they have.
- Talk directly (in private) with the soldiers and ask them specific questions about their work hours, their job descriptions and responsibilities, and other factual items.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Talk directly (in private) with the soldiers and ask them to comment on the commanders' strengths and weaknesses.

- Ask your company commanders to speak to other commanders' soldiers (not their own soldiers) and report back to you with the information they have learned.
- Assign a battalion staff member who does not rate the company commanders to speak with the soldiers and report to you on what he/she learns.
- Speak to the company commanders individually and ask each of them to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the other company commanders and units.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Choose to talk to the soldiers and express your desire to each company commander to use the information you will learn to help with their development as leaders.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Plan to talk to the soldiers and discuss beforehand with each company commander your intention to talk directly to the soldiers and explain your reasons for doing so.

Scenario B11. You are a battalion commander. You have one company commander who is particularly intense. He sets extremely high--even unrealistic--standards for himself. While his company has yet to pay the price for this problem, his expectations are so high that he never can meet them, and this situation is hindering his personal health as well as his professional development as an officer. His company is scheduled for a major training exercise next month. Your goal is to help him better understand how he is hurting himself by maintaining unreasonable standards.

According to the experts, you should...

- Have a discussion with the company commander about his potential problem before he leaves for the training exercise, using examples you are aware of from your daily interactions with him in your unit.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Do nothing. Allow him to learn from his own mistakes that no one can successfully maintain unrealistic standards forever.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Ask another company commander to have a friendly chat with the obsessive company commander about the need to set realistic goals.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Warn the company commander before he goes to the training exercise that you believe he has a serious problem that requires his immediate attention and that may ultimately derail his career.

Protecting the Organization

Scenario B3. You are a new battalion commander and one of your most important and challenging tasks is to establish the training priorities for your unit. While everything looks important and you would like to meet every possible contingency, you also realize that you do not have the time or resources to "do it all." Your goal is to establish your priorities.

According to the experts, you should...

- Study the brigade's training schedule.
- Talk to the brigade S-2, S-3, and CSM to verify your understanding of the brigade commander's training focus.
- Explain your goals and your plans for the battalion very clearly to your officers and staff.
- Select three to five upcoming missions (based on the brigade training plan) to focus your soldiers' energy on.
- Before doing anything, make sure you understand the commander's intent two levels up.
- Soon after taking command, visit each staff section's shop and get a full briefing on their operations.
- Talk to the brigade commander to determine his training priorities.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Select three to five upcoming missions (based on the brigade training plan) to focus your soldiers' energy on.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Assess the tactical and technical competence of your soldiers individually by giving them formal and informal tests.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Study the brigade's training schedule.
- Soon after taking command, visit each staff section's shop and get a full briefing on their operations.

Scenario B4. You are a battalion commander. Your brigade commander has made it clear that he does not wish to speak with you about pressing issues that arise in your battalion. Also, he expects perfection from your battalion at all times, and he seems to view your battalion's poor performance at the JRTC as unforgivable--he keeps harping on past failures. The brigade commander does not provide you with feedback on your strengths and how to improve your weaknesses. His communication style is formal, abrupt, and in your opinion, ineffective. He begins every conversation by reminding you that you are only an 0-5. You are frustrated because you never know where you stand, performance wise, in your brigade commander's eyes and you lack a person from whom to receive performance feedback. In general, you find your situation with the brigade commander to be intolerable, and morale in your unit seems dangerously low.

According to the experts, you should...

- Deal with the brigade commander as best you can, but hold regular sessions with the members of your unit to air concerns and voice problems in the hope of improving morale.
- Remain loyal to the brigade commander so you do not model disloyalty in front of the members of your unit.
- Seek a formal appointment with the brigade commander, state that you and he seem to have a problem, and ask him why.
- Talk to your fellow battalion commanders about the problem and try to develop a joint solution.
- Request advice from one of your brigade commander's superiors whom you already know and trust.
- Talk to the brigade XO and the brigade S3 and try to get some information.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Jump the chain of command and speak to the Assistant Division Commander about the problem with the brigade commander.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Seek a formal appointment with the brigade commander, state that you and he seem to have a problem, and ask him why.
- If you speak to the Assistant Division Commander, prepare yourself for the possibility of a disruption of loyalty in your own unit.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Jump the chain of command and speak to the Assistant Division Commander about the problem with the brigade commander.
- Talk to the brigade XO and the brigade S3 and try to get some information.

Motivating Subordinates

See Scenario B4 above.

Taking Care of Soldiers

Scenario B5. You are a battalion commander and your goal is to implement effective training.

According to the experts, you should...

- Provide soldiers and their families with a copy of an extended training schedule (for example, six months out).
- Develop specific rules and procedures that your battalion uses regularly in order to manage training.
- Take into consideration school vacations and events when planning training.
- Brief families collectively on the extended training schedule once it has been developed--have a family dinner in the mess hall, for example, and then go over the extended training schedule.

- Have regular meetings with your brigade commander to keep him/her focused on what your battalion is doing.
- Once inside the specified time limit, do not make changes to the schedule once the schedule has been distributed.
- If you take away a soldier's weekend for a training exercise, make sure he or she gets it back during another training cycle.
- Try to dissuade your superiors from making sudden changes to the training schedule.
- Communicate your training goals and your vision to your subordinates and your superiors.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Brief families collectively on the extended training schedule once it has been developed--have a family dinner in the mess hall, for example, and then go over the extended training schedule.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Have regular meetings with your brigade commander to keep him/her focused on what your battalion is doing.

Scenario B6. You are a battalion commander, and there are many unmarried soldiers in your unit. You are concerned about the special needs and problems unmarried soldiers may have, since they do not have a regular family life. Your goal is to ensure high morale for your unmarried soldiers.

According to the experts, you should...

- Take special pains to ensure that single soldiers have some place to be on holidays—by arranging meals or outings for single soldiers, for example.
- Maintain procedures and facilities single soldiers need in order to communicate with family members back home--provide access to telephones, writing supplies, and so on--and encourage the soldiers to keep in touch with their families.
- Encourage married soldiers to invite single soldiers to their homes for holidays or other special occasions.

- Take measures (for example, obtaining furniture, making game rooms, and allowing soldiers to decorate the way they like) that will make the billets where the single soldiers live feel more like home to them.
- Spend time with the single soldiers in their dining facility and gym.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Discourage single soldiers from taking holiday leaves and encourage them to take on holiday duties so that married soldiers can spend holidays with their families.

Scenario B10. You are a battalion commander, and one of your primary goals is to ensure that your soldiers have predictability in their lives. Thus, you are concerned about planning training way in advance, and you make it a point to do so. For some time, your unit has been scheduled for a pre-planned battalion-level training exercise. At the last minute, there is a brigade command and staff meeting. At the meeting, the brigade staff announces that they are making major changes in your battalion training plan.

According to the experts, you should...

- Ask to have a minute alone with your commander and express your concerns to him privately, allowing him to voice these concerns openly at the meeting if he chooses to do so.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Be silent. Do not try to second-guess the brigade staff's decision.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- State that soldiers need predictability in their lives, and note that the senior leaders should be setting the correct example.
- State that good training exercises require predictability so that leaders of all levels can learn.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- State that soldiers need predictability in their lives, and note that the senior leaders should be setting the correct example.
- State that good training exercises require predictability so that leaders of all levels can learn.

- After the meeting, attempt to get a consensus among all the battalion commanders regarding this issue, and communicate this shared viewpoint to the brigade commander.
- Stand up and remind the brigade staff, the brigade commander, and your peers about the brigade's specific doctrinal responsibilities for training.
- State that the brigade staff's proposal to change the short-term training schedules is a violation of training doctrine.

Communicating

Scenario B7. You are a battalion commander, and you want to make sure that your soldiers and junior officers share your vision for the battalion.

According to the experts, you should...

- Distribute your command philosophy in writing to all soldiers in your battalion.
- Reinforce your vision in all daily activities and interactions, and do so for the entire term of your command.
- Communicate your vision starting on the first day of your command.
- Solicit feedback and ideas from your junior officers regarding your vision—be alert for ways to improve it.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Do not adhere to a single perspective--be willing to change your vision as necessary to reflect changing needs of the unit.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- On a daily basis, visit company areas in the garrison and in the field, and highlight shortcomings and the progress that has been made toward achieving your vision.
- Communicate your vision starting on the first day of your command.

Your superior will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Do not adhere to a single perspective--be willing to change your vision as necessary to reflect changing needs of the unit.

Scenario B8. You are an artillery battalion commander. You are in direct support of a brigade whose commander is a light infantryman, while your background is mechanized artillery. On several occasions, the differing perspectives of you and your brigade commander result in communication difficulties. For example, you are used to moving on the battlefield at a very fast pace, whereas your commander is used to moving at a slow pace. In fact, communication problems arise often between the two of you. Your goal is to improve your communication with your brigade commander.

According to the experts, you should...

- Speak to the brigade commander, express your feelings about why the two of you sometimes have trouble communicating, and ask for his help with the problem.
- Make an effort to think from the brigade commander's point of view about your unit's activities and performance.
- Speak to the brigade commander, ask him why he believes the two of you sometimes have trouble communicating, and ask for his help with the problem.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Speak to your brigade commander's superior about the problem and ask for his advice.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Make an attempt to interact with the brigade commander as a person outside of the work environment, in a wide variety of settings.

Scenario B12. You are a battalion commander, and you notice early in your command that your guidance often becomes distorted when it reaches the lower ranks. For example, one day you comment that you want the line companies at 100% personnel strength for aircraft mechanics before you will start to assign them to headquarters. A few days later, the headquarters maintenance tech asks you why you are going to fill the line units at 150% of authorized mechanics before assigning them to headquarters! Your goal is to ensure that your guidance is communicated accurately to all levels of the organization.

According to the experts, you should...

- Hold the chain of command responsible for accurately passing information down to lower ranks.

- Work on your relationship with your senior NCOs.
- Conduct periodic discussions with your soldiers to correct misperceptions, clarify your intent, and locate sources of information loss.
- Ask your company commanders to conduct periodic discussions with the soldiers so that the company commanders can verify that the lower levels are receiving accurate information.
- Whenever possible, post and distribute written statements outlining your objectives.
- Encourage your junior officers to be on the lookout for soldiers' statements about your orders that are not completely accurate--and ask the junior officers to correct these misperceptions immediately.
- Spend more time leading by walking around the unit and talking to people.
- Use multiple means of communicating the same message.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Ask your company commanders to conduct periodic discussions with the soldiers so that the company commanders can verify that the lower levels are receiving accurate information.
- Develop an NCO professional development program that stresses how to pass down information properly.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Ask your company commanders to conduct periodic discussions with the soldiers so that the company commanders can verify that the lower levels are receiving accurate information.
- Develop an NCO professional development program that stresses how to pass down information properly.
- When you must communicate important information verbally, try to speak directly to as many officers and soldiers as you can.
- Work on your relationship with your senior NCOs.
- Conduct periodic discussions with your soldiers to correct misperceptions, clarify your intent, and locate sources of information loss.

- Look for breaks in the chain of command.

Managing Self

Scenario B2. You are a battalion commander and it is the end of your first battle at a major externally-evaluated training exercise, during which your unit revealed some major shortcomings. During the After Action Review, the Chief Evaluator is highly critical of the battalion and dwells on all the negative things your unit did that day. You carefully record all of the negative observations, but you know full well that the battalion also did some very positive things that day.

According to the experts, you should...

- Be careful not to vent your frustrations with the Evaluator's feedback in front of the soldiers or your junior officers.
- Leave the After Action Review and return to your units, but when you report to them make sure to note the successes that occurred that day as well as the failures and shortcomings.
- Speak to the Evaluator at another time, and state your desire to receive positive as well as negative feedback so that you know what the units are doing right and wrong.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Ask the Chief Evaluator if he has anything else he would like to say.

Scenario B9. You are a new battalion commander and you are feeling somewhat lonely and frustrated with your job. Your goal is to manage your stress effectively so that it does not interfere with your ability and motivation to perform at your best.

According to the experts, you should...

- Develop a mutual support group with other battalion commanders--talk to them frequently.
- Combat stress by engaging in physical exercise or an activity you enjoy.
- Use your spouse or other close friend from outside of the military as a sounding board.
- Budget time for personal reflection and relaxation.

- Renew your vision and remind yourself of why you wanted to be a battalion commander.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Spend more time at the office and work harder--recognize that more satisfaction will come from pushing yourself harder and getting more done.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Take as much leave as you are entitled to, and while on leave, do not think about work or have contact with work personnel.
- Renew your vision and remind yourself of why you wanted to be a battalion commander.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Talk over your feelings with the brigade commander.

Dealing with Poor Performers

Scenario B13. You are a battalion commander. Reluctantly, you gave your S-1 a company command for his professional development, even though you had questions about his abilities. He was a loyal S-1, but not a very good one: He had problems with organization, and his workstyle was a bit "helter-skelter." In conversations with lieutenants you have learned that they are having a hard time with this individual. Also, as you walk around the battalion, you see other indications that confirm your doubts about this person's abilities. In general, you are concerned and you have doubts about this officer's ability to command effectively.

According to the experts, you should...

- Provide the former S-1 specific help with organization such as hints and strategies you and others have found useful.
- Explain to the former S-1 specifically why it is important for him to change his behavior for the soldiers' benefit.
- Communicate regularly with the officer and encourage him to use you as a resource whenever he has problems.
- Conduct sessions with the former S-1 during which you talk to him about aspects of his behavior you want changed.

According to the experts, you should not...

- Come down hard on the former S-1 about his shortcomings and threaten to take disciplinary action if he does not improve.

Your superior will tend to view you as more effective if you...

- Talk to the S-1's first sergeant to get a better feel for what's going on.

Your subordinates will tend to view you as less effective if you...

- Talk to the S-1's first sergeant to get a better feel for what's going on.
- Ask a competent company commander to mentor the problematic officer.
- Conduct sessions with the former S-1 during which you talk to him about aspects of his behavior you want changed.

General Discussion

The findings presented here offer insight into the type of knowledge that is associated with effective leadership. These findings were generated through a long-term project to identify what knowledge leaders acquire through their experience that is not necessarily taught in the classroom or in manuals. This knowledge is characterized as tacit because generally it is acquired in the course of performing everyday activities and without awareness of the learning process. Also, the knowledge tends not to be readily available in a form that is easily conveyed to others. Through guided questions and probing, however, we were able to bring some of this knowledge to light.

Our previous work showed that tacit knowledge is related to the leadership effectiveness of military officers. However, we found differences in the strength of the relationship depending on the source of the effectiveness ratings. The findings presented here helped to shed light on the nature of those differences. Using data compiled from various sources, we extracted from this knowledge some of the procedural rules (i.e., recommendations) about what to do in particular situations.

There is increasing recognition that different sources have different perspectives on what is and is not effective leadership. The Army already employs 360-degree feedback in leadership development programs for officers (e.g., Azimuth). In our work, we obtained ratings of the effectiveness of leaders in our sample from multiple sources. These data allowed us to examine these different perspectives and to identify specific

response patterns associated with these effectiveness ratings. We also provided expert opinions about the best and worst response alternatives as a basis for comparison.

For many situations, different response options were associated more with superior ratings than subordinate or peer ratings. In some situations, endorsing a certain response option could result in rather divergent evaluations from superiors, subordinates, and experts. In looking at the specific situations, it is easy to see why some of these relationships emerged. For example, in Scenario C19 about maintaining mental effectiveness and readiness, peers rated their fellow company commanders as more effective if they endorsed the option "Use your peers as a sounding board and support group." Those who endorsed the option "Take time alone each day to think, regroup, and work through what's on your mind" were viewed as more effective by their subordinates and superiors. In the same scenario, the experts considered "Sleep" a good option for maintaining readiness, but this same option was associated with lower effective ratings by one's superior.

The differences we observed have implications for the way leaders are assessed and developed. Assessment questions may need to be presented in terms of what is the most appropriate action according to a certain point of view. If one respondent considers the effect that his action will have on subordinates, while another respondent considers the effect that her action will have on her superior, their responses may be worlds apart. In terms of the way leaders are developed, training and self-development materials should include multiple perspectives and encourage leaders to evaluate the trade-offs of selecting different courses of action. Leaders will need to consider the possibility that their actions may not necessarily be viewed similarly by all their constituents. For example, what may be viewed as an effective strategy by one's superior may compromise one's relationship with subordinates. Most importantly, leaders need to be aware that effective leadership does not boil down to a few simple rules about what to do in most situations. Instead it requires considering the various contingencies involved with each situation and choosing from a flexible repertoire of knowledge a response that will likely lead to the desired outcome.

In the increasingly complex and dynamic environment that leaders of the 21st century will encounter, the ability to acquire tacit knowledge from everyday experiences and to apply that knowledge effectively in new situations will be important to successful performance. When opportunities are limited and time is scarce, the lessons that other leaders have gained from their experience can greatly benefit leadership development. Leaders also can benefit from exploring the complex ways in which actions are interpreted by different perspectives.

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